

JORDAN CUSTOMS

Greetings:

Jordanians warmly greet each other with a handshake. Close friends of the same gender often kiss on both cheeks.

Common verbal greetings include *Assalam Alaikum* (Peace be upon you), *Ahlan wa sahlan* (roughly “You are welcome in this place”), *Sabah al khair* (Good morning), *Msa'a al khair* (Good evening), and the more casual *Marhaba* (Hello). After initial greetings, each person inquires about the other's welfare.

When one joins or leaves a small gathering, it is customary to shake hands with each person.

Gender and age peers address one another by first name after an initial introduction. Other people are referred to by various titles, depending on their relationship to the speaker. For instance, adults are respectfully addressed as the mother (*Um*) or father (*Abu*) of their eldest son.

It is a sign of great respect to use *Al-haj* (for men) or *Al-hajjah* (for women) as nicknames for those who have completed a pilgrimage to Makkah. Acquaintances may be addressed as *akhi* (my brother) or *okhti* (my sister) with the last name.

Gestures:

When speaking of money, one rubs the thumb and index finger together.

One might emphasize a point by punching a fist in the air or shaking the index finger at the person being spoken to. “No” can be expressed by tilting the head quickly upward and making a “tsk” sound.

To show respect, one touches the fingers briefly to the forehead and bows the head slightly forward. Rubbing the back of one's hand on the forehead shows great disrespect.

Jordanians generally use the right hand or both hands to pass items or eat.

It is impolite to point the sole of one's foot at or to turn one's back to another person.

Holidays:

National holidays include New Year's Day, Labor Day (1 May), Independence Day (25 May), Arab Revolt and Army Day (10 June), King Hussein's Accession to the Throne (11 Aug.), and King Hussein's Birthday (14 Nov.).

Islamic religious holy days follow the lunar calendar.